

PRESS RELEASE - 21 Feb 2010

IS YOUR WATER SUPPLY SAFE? DOES “THE SYSTEM” WORK TO ENSURE THIS?

ABC's 'Australian Story' as seen part in part 1 (Feb 15th) and to be screened as part 2 (Feb 22nd) draws attention to this issue.

Investigation into possible toxicity of the George River (NE Tasmania) commenced in 2004 following a very large oyster kill. Preceding this in Dec 2003 there had been a crash upstream of a helicopter carrying a combination of chemicals for use on tree plantations, followed by a major flood in Jan 2004. Dr Marcus Scammell subsequently assisted the oyster farmers in attempting to find the cause of their losses and he learned that a local doctor in St Helens, Dr Alison Bleaney, had become increasingly concerned about unusual medical problems in her patients.

Drs Scammell and Bleaney suspected that the source of the oyster deaths and health anomalies was chemical contamination and presented their hypothesis to the government in the form of the “Scammell Report”. They assumed that the report would precipitate an investigation but the authorities responded by attempting to discredit them.

Drs Bleaney and Scammell do not have a political agenda; they are serious about their respective professions, ethics and responsibilities. They therefore decided to conduct their own investigation in accordance with the ANZECC guidelines.

Salient points after years of research which has mostly been self-funded and with the assistance of *pro bono* work from the international scientific community are:

- 1 Chemical contamination whilst a problem, is not the source of this permanently toxic river.
- 2 A reference river which has no toxicity has no plantations in its catchment.
- 3 Certain trees that are grown as massive mono cultures are the source of toxins.
- 4 The species (*Eucalyptus nitens*) is not indigenous to Tasmania and is described by the industry as being genetically enhanced.

Further outcomes must rely on the fourth estate's investigative powers and a Royal Commission and an Integrity Commission Inquiry to answer the questions posed at the outset of this press release. An explanation in more detail from Drs Bleaney and Scammell is attached to this release.

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